

BRUNSWICK NEWS (GA)
3 October 1986

Dangerous Wishing

Economic pressures are not pushing General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev of the Soviet Union toward arms control agreements, according to the Central Intelligence Agency's best Kremlin watchers. This contradicts a contention of President Reagan and the argument that continued arms production in the United States to "restore" us to preeminence, if the Soviets decide to continue the arms race, will bankrupt the "other" superpower.

CIA Director of Soviet Analysis Douglas MacEachin told Congress recently that agreement on arms control would have little immediate effect on the Soviet economy. He said its disarmament proposals were designed to permit it to profit propaganda-wise by retiring obsolete and older weapons without having to cancel new ones. In the long run, the Soviet Union could benefit economically, if it really reduced spending

on and production of arms.

Unless an arms agreement is reached, the CIA expects Soviet arms spending to grow at a faster rate than its economy at least into the next century. It also says that for the first time in 15 years, U.S. spending for weapons is almost as high as the Soviet's and that since 1975, U.S. arms spending has increased while Soviet spending has remained flat.

The Kremlin emphasizes quantity while the U.S. has emphasized quality, weapons which can defeat those of the Red Army and Navy without sustaining "unacceptable" losses. The CIA analysis hasn't changed much under President Reagan, nor does it support his political rhetoric on why the Kremlin may sign some arms control and disarmament agreements after tough bargaining. We worry that the CIA may be right but hope that Mr. Reagan is.